

A WALLACE-READER'S DIGEST FUNDS PROJECT

MONTANA
STATE ACTION for
EDUCATION
LEADERSHIP
PROJECT

Implementation Plan

Submitted to the National Consortium:
Council of Chief State School Officers
Education Commission of the States
National Association of State Boards of Education
National Conference of State Legislatures
National Governors Association

Submitted by Linda McCulloch, Superintendent of Public Instruction
On behalf of the Montana SAELP Consortium

Montana

State Action for Education Leadership Project

Introduction

A consortium of state education policy makers was formed as part of the Montana State Action for Education Leadership Project. The consortium's main goal is to contribute to the resolution of the leadership crisis currently facing rural schools in Montana. This will be accomplished by creating a comprehensive approach to changing state policies, laws, regulations, and practices that affect education leadership and that ultimately will result in increased student learning.

Shortage of School Leaders in Montana

Mirroring national conditions, nearly every survey of school leaders in Montana indicates there is, and increasingly will be, a shortage of school leaders in the state. One indicator of that shortage is the number of administrators who will soon be retiring. According to the professional certificates issued in the state of Montana during 1996-97, within 10 years nearly 50% of principals and 60% of superintendents will be new to their positions, since many current administrators are likely to have retired by 2007 (Office of Public Instruction, 1999). The Montana School Boards Association (1999) sponsored a study focused on the shortage of qualified principals and superintendents in the state. The study found that of the 105 responding superintendents, 50% were planning on retiring within the next five years. Of the 126 principal respondents, 26% were planning on retiring within the same time period.

Problems in Hiring

In addition, school board chairs cite problems in hiring school leaders for Montana's schools. Of 73 school board chairs and of 67 superintendents who had hired administrators in

the last three years, only 20 school board chairs and 10 superintendents indicated having no problems in filling the open positions (Montana School Boards Association, 1999). Most often, board chairs and superintendents indicated the pool of applicants was too small, or individuals in the pool were not well qualified.

The Montana Statewide Education Profile, published by the Office of Public Instruction (2001) reports that in the 1998-99 school year, school districts were beginning to experience more difficulty filling teaching and administrative positions than in the past. Another indication that teacher and administrator positions would get more and more difficult to fill was 6% decline in the number of initial teacher certifications issued by Office of Public Instruction from 1996-97 to 1998-99.

Individuals Qualified for Administrative Positions But Not Working in the Position

Most of the respondents in a study of individuals qualified for administrative jobs but not currently working in administrative positions indicated that they resided in the most populated areas in the state (Montana School Boards Association, 1999). Relocation issues together with salary issues were contributing reasons why these individuals decided not to pursue or accept administrative positions outside of their communities. Of these individuals indicated that 54% planned to apply for administrative positions in the future, but most indicated they had not yet decided when they would apply. The next most common response was they would apply within the next two years.

Disincentives

Perhaps one of the most significant disincentives for individuals seeking administrative positions in Montana is the low salary associated with the job's increased responsibilities. Montana superintendent, high school principal, and elementary school principal salaries were

well below both the national and regional means in 1997, according to a statewide study conducted by the School Administrators of Montana. The biggest difference in salaries occurred between Montana superintendents and the national mean salary for superintendents. On average, Montana superintendents received \$43,309 less pay than superintendents around the nation. Additionally, Montana superintendents' mean salaries were \$23,816 below those in the Rocky Mountain region.

Superintendents and principals studied in Montana agree the three incentives that would most encourage them to remain in school administration were improved salaries, improved retirement benefits, and increased earning power after retirement (Montana School Boards Association, 1999). The literature calls for states to develop policies that enrich their pool of potential school leaders by enhancing retirement portability among states. This could increase school leaders' interstate movement without sacrificing retirement benefits, while also encouraging effective leaders to remain on the job. One of the biggest disincentives for school leaders in Montana is the lack of retirement portability.

Accreditation, Certification, and Licensure Issues

Currently state standards for accreditation, certification and licensure reflect a management-based approach, as opposed to a student learning approach. In order to be certified, prospective school leaders complete a degree preparation programs that reflects unique Montana Standards or its equivalent. This certification is granted upon completion of course work, and is not tied to performance criteria. Additionally, no differentiated certification paths are available for individuals seeking to become school leaders in the state.

School Governance Issues

School board members in Montana are not required to attend training. School trustee raining is optional and is offered through the Montana School Boards Association.

Superintendent authority and roles are not clearly defined by state law. The local school district trustees are given a great degree of autonomy in making hiring, firing, and curricular decisions. Levels of shared governance vary across the state from school district to school district. Also, no State sanctions exist for poor performing schools.

Actions

Along with the workings of the state consortium, the project plan included a comprehensive data collection of existing policies and practices that influence school leadership in Montana. A thorough review of current research on school leadership was also conducted, together with a discrepancy analysis of best practice and current practice in Montana. Through this discrepancy analysis gaps were identified which served to focus consortium efforts at identifying problems and generating solutions.

I. Summary of Actions Taken by the State Consortium Using Its Design Grant to Prepare the Implementation Plan

The Montana State Consortium applied resources from the design grant by first conducting a thorough review of current literature in the field of education administration. Research focused primarily on current studies that sought to prove a form of best practice in specific topics. Topics researched centered around the six major themes identified by the Council of Chief State School Officers et al. in their State Policy and Practice Compendium. Those six topics were: (1) state priority for and approach to school leadership; (2) the candidate pool; (3) education and professional learning; (4) licensure, certification, and program accreditation; (5) conditions of professional practice; and (6) authority for practice and governance structures. An additional topic of research centered on the issues of women and

minorities in school leadership. Research focused on current studies, together with exemplary practices cited in specific states.

Additionally, research focused on specific needs found in rural contexts. Other issues discussed included a description of individuals certified to be school leaders, but not seeking positions in the field, performance review and selection of school leaders. Another important issue explored was the relationship between superintendents and school board members.

Next, research was conducted regarding the status of current conditions for school leaders in Montana. A discrepancy analysis was then conducted between current state practices and best practices identified in the research for each of the six major topics. Major policy areas needing attention were identified and then prioritized through this comparison.

Consortium members used the research and discrepancy analysis to set goals that would remove barriers to increasing the number of school leaders in Montana and improving the quality of these leaders. Specifically, the State Consortium focused on major policy issues affecting school leadership in Montana. The State Consortium met in May, September, and October of 2001. Also, certain members of the State Consortium attended National Consortium meetings in July and November 2001. In addition to face-to-face meetings, communication among the State Consortium is typically conducted electronically.

II (a): Vision, Goals and Purposes of the Montana SAELP Consortium:

Our vision is for all Montana schools and students to perform at high levels. The role of leadership in realizing this vision requires a redefinition of the principalship and the superintendency that makes student learning the core priority. Our mission is to create an environment of leadership for learning by changing existing policies and creating a culture in Montana schools and communities that values, supports, and sustains school and district leaders. We will know that we have succeeded when policies change, leadership roles change, and student learning and school success is high. To accomplish this vision and purpose, we have set the following goals:

MONTANA'S GOALS TO CHANGE STATE POLICIES THAT AFFECT DISTRICT AND SCHOOL LEADERSHIP:

GOAL 1: The State Consortium will address the **quality** of school leaders by revising state policies to focus leadership on student achievement and away from management.

SAELP Strategy IV: Licensure, Certification and Program Accreditation

SAELP Strategy III: Education and Professional Development

SAELP Strategy V: Conditions of Professional Practice: Performance Review, Incentives

SAELP Strategy I: State Approaches to Education Leadership: Standards

Strategies to Implement Goal 1:

- 1.1 Create a career ladder for Montana school leaders using a four-tiered school leader certification that recognizes and rewards demonstrated leadership proficiency by amending Board of Public Education policy.
- 1.2 Align school leader preparation, certification, professional development, and evaluation with Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for School Leaders by amending Board of Public Education policy.
- 1.3. Create a fully funded and sustainable Center for Leadership Development for school leaders in Montana to provide continuous professional development in leadership by securing legislative funding.

GOAL 2: The State Consortium will address the existing and predicted **shortage** of school leaders by changing state policies.

SAELP Strategy II: The Candidate Pool
SAELP Strategy V: Conditions of Professional Practice

Strategies to implement Goal 2:

- 2.1: Amend Montana Teacher Retirement law to address school leaders retirement disincentive through legislative action.
- 2.2: Provide for certification reciprocity for school leaders from other states seeking positions in Montana by amending Board of Public Education policy.
- 2.3: Provide opportunities for women and minorities to train for and obtain school leadership positions by securing legislative funding.
- 2.4: Attract new candidates to the principalship and superintendency by redefining the traditional career path to the position by influencing Montana School Board candidate searches and hiring practices.

GOAL 3: The State Consortium will **align** school leadership reform with existing state education reform to complement and not compete with existing reform efforts.

SAELP Strategy I: State Approaches to Education Leadership
SAELP Strategy VI: Governance Structure and Authority for Practice

Strategies to Implement Goal 3:

- 3.1: Establish a link between school leadership and student performance in low performing schools by creating Board of Public Education policy.
- 3.2: Define role of principal and superintendent in developing a school improvement plan by amending Board of Public Education policy.
- 3.3: Amend Montana statute to redefine the role of the principal and superintendent as instructional leaders through legislative action.
- 3.4: Amend Montana statute to redefine the role and responsibilities of School Board members to reflect instructional leadership through legislative action.

GOAL 4: The State Consortium will develop a system for **data-based research and analysis** to inform policy development on leadership strategies that support teaching and learning, to provide data on the status of district and school leadership needs and demographics, and to evaluate the effectiveness of new policy implementation for the purpose of advising Montana and other rural states of effective reform.

SAELP Strategy I: State Approaches to Education Leadership

Strategies to Implement Goal 4:

- 4.1: Establish a legislative interim study committee of legislators and business leaders to examine the role of school leaders in high performing and low performing schools for the purpose of influencing policy and legislative action.
- 4.2: Conduct a statewide forum and survey of practitioners to identify the conditions of practice that are disincentives to school leaders seeking and retaining positions of leadership for the purpose of influencing policy and legislative action.
- 4.3: Examine low achieving schools and a sampling of high achieving schools in Montana to link student performance and school leadership for the purpose of influencing policy and legislative action.
- 4.4 Survey practitioners, school board members, and certificate holders to update the 1999 *Study of the Shortage of School Administrators in Montana* to include shortage data on women and minorities for the purpose of (1) determining the needed candidate pool to improve diversity and quality by both expanding and limiting the candidate pool and (2) influencing policy and legislative action.
- 4.5 Evaluate all policy changes and use our demonstration projects to determine impact and level of commitment required by local districts to implement changes.

II (b): Roles and Responsibility of the State Consortium in realizing the vision, mission and goals:

The Montana SAELP Consortium is committed to using our collective resources and individual positions to ensure that research is conducted, forums are held, and stakeholders are influenced resulting in new and amended State policy that drives changes in leadership of Montana's schools with the ultimate goal of improving student learning. The Governor,

Superintendent of Public Instruction, Board of Public Education, legislature, professional associations, practitioners, business leaders, and parents who make up our Consortium will leverage the resources of the SAELP implementation grant by using their positions and considerable power to implement the work plan of this proposal. Our Consortium is committed not only to the ideals of the vision and goals but also to the outcome of actual change in policy. The commitment will be evidenced in advising policy development, securing new and amended policy, and implementing actual changes in practice. The people and positions required to make substantive and sustainable change are at the table and have pledged their collective resources in creating new leaders for tomorrow by altering state policies that affect district and school leadership.

III. Comprehensive Approach to Leverage the Strategies:

DESCRIPTION OF THE STRATEGIES:

Goal 1: The State Consortium will address the quality of school leaders by focusing leadership on student achievement and away from management through changing state policies.

GOAL 1: STRATEGY 1.1:

Goal 1: Strategy 1.1: Create a career ladder for Montana school leaders using a four-tiered school leader certification that recognizes and rewards leadership proficiency by amending Board of Public Education policy.

SAELP Strategies IV: Licensure and Certification III: Professional Development, and V: Incentives

Currently, Montana certifies school and district leaders by accepting the recommendation of the two Universities that offer administrative preparation programs. The recommendations are based on successful completion of courses that reflect state accreditation standards and ISLLC

standards. Additionally, provisional certification for the principalship and superintendency can be obtained.

The proposed tiered school leader certification improves existing provisional certification, retains traditional certification recommended by the Universities, and adds two additional levels that form a career ladder for school leaders. The model follows:

Level 1: Intern Certification: Provisional certificate for three years to allow a candidate who holds a teaching certification and has a minimum of three years of teaching experience to begin a principalship without a school administration master's degree or required certification courses. The requirements are: (1) the candidate must complete required training/courses for certification within three years, (2) the candidate receives mentoring from multiple sources including an on-site mentor, an off-site mentor, university mentor, and mentoring from the professional association and, (3) the candidate has a one-year supervised formal internship.

Level 2: Entry or Basic Certification: Entry certification is awarded upon completion of a master's degree in education leadership or, if the candidate holds a master's degree in another content area, the successful completion of courses required for principal or superintendent certification. The candidate would be required to have a professional development plan on file with the Board of Public Education, which would require annual training at leadership academies addressing the six ISLLC standards. Additionally, the candidate would participate in formal induction and mentoring programs.

Level 3: ISLLC Certification: Awarded upon successfully passing at a particular cut score the School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA) exam for principals and School Superintendent's Assessment (SSA) exam for superintendents. These exams were developed by ISLLC and ETS and are currently being used in several states. This certification reflects some degree of

"alternative certification" making it possible to sit for the exam without taking formal university school administration courses. Incentives to take the SLLA or SSA exam would be offered by local districts. It is our intent to use our demonstration and LEAD sites to determine what level of incentives would be required to motivate administrators who currently hold administrative certification to be willing to upgrade to SLLA or SSA certification.

Level 4: National Board Certification for School Leaders: When and if National Board

Certification for School Leaders becomes available it is our intent to use it as the top of the career ladder. Rewards for successful completion of National Board Certification would reflect those given by the state for teachers who successfully complete National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. If National Board Certification for School Leaders is not forthcoming, the Portfolio Assessment for School Leaders developed by ISLLC and Educational Testing Service, which is targeted for completion in summer 2002, may be an option.

ACTION PLAN TO IMPLEMENT STRATEGY 1.1

<u>Action</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Leadership</u>
1. Obtain expert background on ISLLC from Joe Murphy for all stakeholders (scheduled)	3/02	Consortium
2. Influence Board of Public Education certification committee to recommend career ladder proposal	4/02	Consortium
3. Amend Board of Public Education Policy	6/02	Director of Board
4. Train and organize state resources to offer ISLLC certification	6/03	Consultants
5. Secure legislative sponsorship and write bill to amend laws to include incentives for administrators who pass national board certification	9/02	Consort. Legislators
6. Amend existing legislation on incentives for passing National board certification for teachers	2003 session	Consort. Legislators

GOAL 1: STRATEGY 1.2

Goal 1: Strategy 1.2 Align school leader preparation, certification, professional development, and evaluation with ISLLC Standards for School Leaders by amending Board of Public Education policy.

SAELP Strategies I: Standards, III: Education and Professional Development, IV: Program Accreditation, and V: Conditional of Professional Practice Performance Review.

Full alignment of preparation, certification, professional development, and evaluation for school leaders with ISLLC Standards will realize the state vision of creating an environment of leadership for learning. The school administrator preparation programs have been realigned with ISLLC Standards. Additionally, the administrator

preparation programs need to be audited to determine the extent to which ISLLC standards are reflected in program design, course content, course materials, teaching strategies, and performance assessment. This audit would be initially conducted by an outside reviewer and, within five years, conducted through formal accreditation review. The alignment of certification is described in strategy 1.1.

Professional development for school administrators is currently focused on management and organized primarily through professional associations in annual conferences financed by participant dues and fees. Recently, through grant (Bill Gates Foundation) sources, leadership academies during the summer and through distance learning have been offered. The Consortium would refocus, expand, and improve professional development opportunities for school leaders by establishing a Center for Leadership Development through a specified on-going source of legislative funding. The Center would also sponsor intensive training for ISLLC exam preparation and administration. Mandated professional development for Level 2 Basic Certification holders would be offered through the Center. Existing Leadership Academies and

expanded professional association professional development would be offered under the umbrella of the Center.

The final step in the full alignment process involves evaluation of school leaders. The Consortium intends to develop a state best-practice model evaluation for principals and superintendents. The model will be designed using the ISLLC model currently being developed for Delaware by Joe Murphy. While the best-practice model will be voluntary, we expect the model to be adopted by the Montana School Boards Association (MSBA) and the Montana Association of School Superintendents (MASS). MSBA will assume responsibility for training school board members in the implementation of the superintendent evaluation model. MASS will train superintendents in implementation of the principal evaluation model. The state has previously had good success in creating voluntary best-practice models (i.e., superintendent contracts) resulting in nearly statewide adoption. Policy outcomes include:

- a. Amendment of Board of Public Education Accreditation Standards for school administrator preparation programs to reflect ISLLC Standards.
- b. Secure earmarked legislative funding for a Center for Leadership Development to support the professional development of school leaders.
- c. MSBA and MASS adoption of best-practice administrator evaluation models together with a commitment of resources for training for implementation.

ACTION PLAN TO IMPLEMENT STRATEGY 1.2

<u>Action</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Leadership</u>
1. Board of Public Education program accreditation standards for school administrator preparation programs amended to reflect ISLLC standards.	1/04	Board Director
2. Audit of school administrator preparation programs	7/02-7/03	Consultants
3. Formal accreditation review of administrator preparation		

programs by Board of Public Education	by 2006	Board of Educ.
4. Secure legislative funding for Center	2003 session	Consortium
5. Create Center (fiscally, physically, management)	6/03	Proj. Director
6. Subsume existing professional development efforts	9/03	Consortium
7. Create new professional development opportunities	9/03	Proj. Director and consultants
8. Awareness training for stakeholders on ISLLC evaluation model with Joe Murphy (scheduled)	3/02	Consortium
9. Adopt administrator best-practice evaluations	1/03	Stakeholders
10. Train on use of model evaluations and implement use	9/03	Associations

GOAL 1: STRATEGY 1.3:

Goal 1: Strategy 1.3: Create a sustainable Center for Leadership Development for school leaders in Montana to provide continuous professional development by securing earmarked legislative funding.

SAELP Strategy III:
Professional learning.

Professional development for school leaders is currently focused on management, is organized primarily through professional associations in annual conferences, and financed by participant dues and fees. Establishing a Center for Leadership Development will refocus professional development on leadership and will expand current

professional development opportunities. The Center will have multiple roles including:

- a) leadership academies for existing school leaders,
- b) leadership academies for aspiring school leaders,
- c) intensive "fast track" preparation for SLLA and SSA certification,
- d) leadership academies for school board trustees,
- e) Provision of "fast-track" academies off-site at reservation schools having the highest number or proportions of low achieving, minority students to attract minority candidates to leadership positions,
- f) intensive summer training for teacher leaders or master teachers who will participate with principals in instructional leadership,

- g) operate as a clearinghouse for administrative positions and job seekers,
- h) centralize critical data regarding school leadership in Montana and the status of school leadership needs, state leadership demographics and expected changes as a result of the new policy implementation and,
- i) focus data on rural strategies that could be adopted by other rural states.

The Center would be funded through earmarked legislative funding and participant fees.

Policy changes required to implement this strategy include legislative action to earmark new dollars for on-going and sustainable funding for the Center for Leadership Development.

ACTION PLAN TO IMPLEMENT STRATEGY 1.3

<u>Action</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Leadership</u>
1. Secure earmarked legislative funding for a Center for leadership Development to support the professional development needs of school leaders	2003 session	Consort. Legislator
2. Create Center (financial, physical, management)	6/03	Project Director
3. Expand existing professional development efforts	9/03	New staff

Goal 2: The State Consortium will address the existing and predicted shortage of school leaders by changing state policies.

GOAL 2: STRATEGY 2.1:

Goal 2: Strategy 2.1: Amend Montana Teacher Retirement law to address school leaders retirement disincentives through legislative action.

SAELP Strategies V: Conditions of Professional Practice.

There is wide agreement among Montana school leaders that the existing retirement system serves as a disincentive to retaining school leaders in the state. Loran Frazier, Executive Director of School Administrators of Montana reports that the

professional association views revision of the existing retirement system as a top priority.

Recommendations under consideration include allowing administrators to draw pension and salary concurrently, and changing the pension benefit formula by increasing the multiplier after 30 years of service. As many states have already enacted some type of retirement reform, research into the effectiveness of retirement reform in other states would be undertaken. Retirement reform would also need to address incentives such as loan forgiveness, bonuses, and time-off to teachers who are interested in becoming school administrators. Once agreement was reached among stakeholders on the most advantageous plan, the Consortium would propose changes in existing law through legislative action in the 2003 legislative session.

ACTION PLAN TO IMPLEMENT STRATEGY 2.1:

<u>Action</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Leadership</u>
1. Research retirement revisions found to be incentives to retain school leaders in other states	complete by 9/1/02	Consultant
2. Obtain stakeholder support for retirement revision proposal	9/1/02	Consortium
3. Secure legislative support to draft legislation	9/02	Consortium
4. Amend existing legislation covering administrative retirement.	2003 session	Consortium legislator

GOAL 2: STRATEGY 2.2:

Goal 2: Strategy 2.2:
Provide certification portability for school leaders from other states seeking positions in Montana by amending Board of Public Education policy.

SAELP Strategy II: The Candidate Pool

Currently it is extremely difficult for school leaders who are certified in other states to become certified in Montana.

Montana has some unique certification standards that require out-of-state certified principals and superintendents to take several school administration courses to become fully certified.

This, coupled with low pay, has proven to be a significant

disincentive for quality school leaders from other states to seek positions in Montana. The

Consortium proposes a change in Board of Public Education school administrator certification policy that would allow any administrator who has passed the SLLA or SSA certification exam at a particular cut off score to receive reciprocal certification in Montana to promote interstate mobility of administrators. This strategy would be implemented in conjunction with Strategy 1.1 to revise administrator certification to include the SLLA and SSA exams.

ACTION PLAN TO IMPLEMENT STRATEGY 2.2:

<u>Action</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Leadership</u>
1. Amend Board of Public Education policy on certification of school administrators to include reciprocity for those who have successfully passed the ISLLC exam	6/02	Director of BOPE

GOAL 2: STRATEGY 2.3:

Goal 2: Strategy 2.3: Provide opportunities for women and minorities to train for and obtain school leadership positions by securing earmarked legislative funding for on-site leadership academies.

SAELP Strategy II: The Candidate Pool and Equity

Leadership academies will be offered on Indian reservations that have the highest numbers or proportions of low achieving minority students to remove barriers that keep women and minorities who have ties to the reservation from participating in and successfully completing leadership preparation

programs. By delivering preparation programs on the reservations, talented minority candidates and women who might not otherwise access school administration preparation programs would be encouraged to attend and complete. If candidates who show leadership promise and who have a commitment to improving student achievement in reservation schools can be identified, student achievement gains can be realized. Using our demonstration schools, we could determine necessary incentives to encourage participation and completion of school administrator preparation and to ultimately fill leadership positions in reservation schools. Research would be

conducted on how talented candidates could be identified and whether it would be helpful to use some predictor instruments in determining talent among women and minorities on reservations. When securing earmarked legislative funding for the Center for Leadership Development (see Strategy 1.3), the need to provide training on reservations to expand the candidate pool of school leaders with women and minorities will be a focus of the legislative effort. Policy changes that will be needed to implement this strategy include legislative action to create a sustained funding source earmarked for the Center for Leadership Development.

ACTION PLAN TO IMPLEMENT STRATEGY 2.3:

Action	Time	Leadership
--------	------	------------

See strategy 1.3

GOAL 2: STRATEGY 2.4:

Goal 2: Strategy 2.4: Attract new candidates to the principalship and superintendency by redefining the traditional career path to the position by influencing Montana School board Association candidate searches and hiring practices

SAELP Strategy V: Conditions of Practice and **II:** The Candidate Pool:

The traditional career path to the principalship and superintendency needs to be altered to attract new and diverse leaders to the position. Traditional career paths to the high school principalship predominately reflect male candidates who are or have been successful coaches moving to

assistant principal or athletic director positions and then to the high school principalship. The path to the superintendency is traditionally one where successful male high school principals move to the superintendency. Alternative career paths would include male high school teachers not only moving to high school principalships and athletic directorships, but also moving to middle and elementary school principalships. Women need to be encouraged to seek school

leadership positions at the middle and high school levels, and successful women principals need to be encouraged to seek superintendencies. The career path to middle and high school principal positions needs to be redefined to value instructional leadership, including leading school improvement efforts. Research on successes of nontraditional leaders needs to be collected and strategies developed to influence candidate searches and hiring practices. Key advisory groups like the Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education need to participate in planning and policy development that will result in more minority and women recruited and retained as school leaders. Montana School Boards Association (MSBA) conducts training for local school boards in searches and hiring practices. Additionally, MSBA contracts with school districts to conduct superintendent searches. As well as shaping policy, the Consortium would use research to shape training and searches conducted by MSBA and thus change practice.

ACTION PLAN TO IMPLEMENT STRATEGY 2.4:

Action	Time	Leadership
Research successful non-traditional leaders	9/02	Consultant
Change MSBA training on recruitment and hiring	1/03	Consortium
Change MSBA search policies	1/03	Consortium

Goal 3: The State Consortium will align school leadership reform with existing state education reform to compliment and not compete, with existing reform efforts.

GOAL 3: STRATEGY 3.1:

Goal 3: Strategy 3.1: Establish the link between school leadership and student performance in low performing schools through new Board of Public Education policy.

SAELP Strategy I: State Approaches to Education Leadership

Research that links school leadership and student performance both nationally and specific to Montana needs to be conducted. Armed with these research results, new Board of Public Education policy

will be proposed requiring leaders of low performing districts to be on a professional development improvement plan focused on leadership for student achievement. This mandatory professional development would be required of the school and district leaders and district trustees until the school and district provide evidence of student achievement and school success gains. This strategy requires the development of new Board of Public Education Policy.

ACTION PLAN TO IMPLEMENT STRATEGY 3.1:

<u>Action</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Leadership</u>
1. Research both nationally and in Montana the link between student performance and leadership.	9/02	Consultant
2. Write new Board of Public Education(BOPE) policy requiring professional development for leaders in low performing schools.	1/03	Proj. Director BOPE Exec.

GOAL 3: STRATEGY 3.2:

Goal 3: Strategy 3.2: Define the role of the principal and superintendent in developing a school improvement plan by amending Board of Public Education policy guidance.

SAELP Strategy I: State Approaches to Education Leadership

The Montana Board of Public Education adopted policy requiring schools and districts to have a school improvement plan in place by 2003. The Board viewed this as a major instrument to inform and influence change and

to focus the mission of the school on student achievement. The Office of Public Instruction was charged by the Board with developing guidance to schools and districts on the development of their plans. This guidance provides an opportunity to define the role of the principal and superintendent as instructional leaders in creating the plan. If the role of the principal and superintendent as instructional leaders was clearly defined in the official guidance document and in the training conducted by Office Of Public Instruction for creating a school improvement plan,

it would help redefine the role of school leaders as instructional leaders and would increase accountability of school leaders for improving student achievement and school quality. The State Consortium will influence the writing of the official guidance document and training plan for implementing the Board of Public Education policy requiring schools and districts to have in place a school and district improvement plan.

ACTION PLAN TO IMPLEMENT STRATEGY 3.2:

<u>Action</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Leadership</u>
1. Develop language in collaboration with Office of Public Instruction (OPI) that clearly defines the role of principal and superintendent in the development of a school improvement plan as instructional leader.	3/02	Project Director and OPI

GOAL 3: STRATEGY 3.3:

Goal 3: Strategy 3.3:
Amend Montana law to
redefine the duties of
principals and
superintendents as
instructional leaders
through legislative action.

SAELP Strategy VI:
 Governance Structure and
 Authority for Practice

Montana statutes define the duties of the school superintendent.

However, the writing is reflective of traditional views of the superintendent as managers rather than as instructional leaders.

Statutes provide very limited direction as to the duties of the principal and there is no writing that even suggests a connection to the instructional program or student achievement.

The State Consortium will research appropriate "job

descriptions" from other states and will recommend statutory amendments to clearly describe the principal and superintendent as instructional leaders.

ACTION PLAN TO IMPLEMENT STRATEGY 3.3:

<u>Action</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Leadership</u>
1. Research best practice "job descriptions" for leaders	fall, 2002	Project director
2. Amend Montana statute to with appropriate job description that reflects instructional leadership	2003 session	Consortium

GOAL 3: STRATEGY 3.4

Goal 3: Strategy 3.4:
Amend Montana statute to redefine the power and duties of school board trustees to reflect their responsibility for instructional leadership through legislative action.

SAELP Strategy IV:
Governance Structure and Authority for Practice

Montana statute defines the powers and duties of school district trustees. While there are 26 specific duties itemized, only one references any connection between the trustees and instructional leadership. The State Consortium will research appropriate "job descriptions" from other states and suggest amendments to Montana statute to clearly link the duties of the trustees to instructional leadership.

ACTION PLAN TO IMPLEMENT STRATEGY 3.4:

<u>Action</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Leadership</u>
1. Research best practice "job descriptions" and write an appropriate job description	fall, 2002	Project Director
2. Amend Montana statute to redefine the powers and duties of school districts trustees to include instructional leadership	2003 session	Consortium

Goal 4: The State Consortium will develop a system for data-based research and analysis to inform policy development on leadership strategies that support teaching and learning, to provide data on the status of district and school leadership needs and demographics, and to evaluate the effectiveness of new policy implementation for the purpose of advising Montana and other rural states of effective reform.

GOAL 4: STRATEGY 4.1:

Goal 4: Strategy 4.1: Convene a legislative interim study committee made up of legislators from both parties and key influential business leaders to examine the role of school leaders in high performing and low performing schools for the purpose of influencing policy and legislative action.

SAELP Strategy I: State Approaches to Education Leadership

With the assistance of legislators on our State Consortium, a legislative interim study committee will be called to examine the link between student performance and leadership. The committee will consist of legislators from both parties and key influential business leaders. The committee's charge will be to examine leadership in high performing and

low performing schools and districts and to draw conclusions about the link. Once this link has been established, the committee would be actively involved in creating solutions to improve leadership in low performing schools. The expected outcome of this effort is that this committee of legislators and key business leaders will be supportive of legislation required to change existing law to support the goals and strategies of the State Consortium. It is further expected that the committee will be supportive of earmarked funding to create a Center for Leadership Development to expand professional development opportunities for school leaders and to focus professional development on student achievement and away from management. The role of key influential business leaders will be critical in gaining full legislative support for actions that will be in front of the 2002 legislative body. Business leaders speaking in favor of legislative action on issues dealing with education leadership will strengthen the voices of policy makers and

educators and will help ensure successful implementation of the goals and strategies of the State Consortium. The legislators on the State Consortium have already secured support for the interim legislative study committee.

ACTION PLAN TO IMPLEMENT STRATEGY 4.1:

<u>Action</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Leadership</u>
1. Identify key legislators and business leaders to sit on the interim legislative study committee.		
2. Convene and charge the study committee	9/02	Governor
3. Secure support for legislative policy changes and funding proposals to reform school leadership	1/03	Consort. Legislators

GOAL 4: STRATEGY 4.2:

Goal 4: Strategy 4.2: Conduct a statewide forum and survey of practitioners to identify the conditions of practice that need to be changed in order to recruit and retain quality school leaders in Montana.

SAELP Strategy V: Conditions for Professional Practice.

The Board of Public Education through its Standards and Certification Advisory Council holds annual education forums. The State Consortium will propose that the forum topic for 2002 and 2003 will be focused on the conditions of practice for school leaders. This forum will be supported by the research of the

Montana SAELP project. Additionally, the Board of Public Education through its Standards and Certification Advisory Council will conduct a survey of practitioners in Montana on the condition of practices to help identify those practices that need to be changed in order to recruit and retain quality school leaders in Montana. The forum and survey results will assist the State Consortium in formulating policy changes having the greatest potential for strengthening education leadership. The involvement and advice of stakeholders will enable state policy makers to develop better policies and will ensure support of new and revised policies by

practitioners. Additionally, the findings of the forum and survey will be used to influence legislators and other key policy makers in supporting the goals and strategies developed by the State Consortium. To implement this strategy, the Board of Public Education and its advisory council needs to agree to focus their data gathering effort in forums and surveys on education leadership.

ACTION PLAN TO IMPLEMENT STRATEGY 4.2:

<u>Action</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Leadership</u>
1. Secure support from Board of Public Education (BOPE) and its advisory council to focus on education leadership.	3/02	Project Dir.
2. Conduct annual forum on conditions of practice	7/02	BOPE
3. Conduct survey on conditions of practice	9/02	BOPE
4. Analyze and report findings	10/02	Proj. Dir.

GOAL 4: STRATEGY 4.3

Goal 4: Strategy 4.3:
Examine low achieving schools and a sampling of high achieving schools in Montana to link student performance and school leadership for the purpose of influencing policy and legislative action.

SAELP Strategy 1: State Approaches to Educational Leadership

Using strategies from the national research linking student achievement and school leadership, an examination of the leadership in schools where students scored the lowest in the State achievement test and in a sampling of schools where students score at high levels will be conducted. The findings of this study will be used to support the work of the interim legislative study committee and to influence policy makers and

legislators to support the goals and strategies of the State Consortium.

ACTION PLAN TO IMPLEMENT STRATEGY 4.3:

<u>Action</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Leadership</u>
1. Obtain national studies linking student achievement and leadership to support the Montana study.	3/02	Consortium
2. Conduct study and report findings linking student achievement and leadership in Montana	9/02	Consultant

GOAL 4: STRATEGY 4.4:

Goal 4: Strategy 4.4: Survey practitioners, school board members, and certificate holders to update the 1999 *Study of the Shortage of School Administrators in Montana* to include data on women and minorities for the purpose of identifying the status of the candidate pool, to improve diversity and quality, and to influence policy and legislative action.

SAELP Strategies I: State Approaches to Education Leadership, II: The Candidate Pool, and V: Conditions for Professional Practice.

Montana School Boards Association
in collaboration with the Board of Public
Education, School Administrators of
Montana and Montana State University
conducted a study in 1999 to identify the
existing and pending shortage of school
administrators in Montana. This study
verified that there is and will be a crisis in

school leadership in Montana schools. The 1999 study, however, did not disaggregate data concerning women and minorities. The 1999 study needs to be updated and revised to provide the state with data on the status of district and school leadership needs and state leadership demographics and expected changes. Additionally, the State Consortium recognizes the need to create a system where this type of data is collected in an ongoing, systematic way to inform policy makers both at state and local levels. Thus, one of the charges of the Center for Leadership Development will be to improve the consistency and thoroughness of data regarding administrative shortages and leadership quality by annually collecting, reporting, and warehouse

this data so it will be current and available to inform decisions. State funding through legislative action for the Center will allow for this ongoing data collection.

ACTION PLAN TO IMPLEMENT STRATEGY 4.4:

<u>Action</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Leadership</u>
1. Update the 1999 administrative shortage study	9/02	Consultant
2. Create a system for ongoing data collection	2003	Project Dir.

GOAL 4: STRATEGY 4.5:

Goal 4: Strategy 4.5: Evaluate all policy changes and use our demonstration project sites and LEAD district to determine impact and level of commitment required by local districts to implement changes.

SAELP Strategy 1: State Approaches to Education Leadership and **VI.** Governance Structures and Authority for Practice.

Research and analysis of all policy changes will be conducted to determine whether the changes implemented improved school leadership in Montana schools and whether student achievement was positively effected.

During the design phase of the SAELP project, process evaluation was conducted. The Consortium

will continue to evaluate its processes to ensure that practitioners' advice is included in the research, analysis and policy development. Additionally, formative evaluation will be conducted and reported to the Consortium semi-annually on the progress being made toward goals based on benchmarks established in the project plan of work. Final evaluation will be based on the degree to which the goals established by the State Consortium are accomplished and the effectiveness of new policies in improving education leadership and student learning. The State Consortium will contract with an evaluator experienced in collecting, analyzing, and reporting both quantitative and qualitative data. The evaluator will attend all meetings with the State Consortium to be fully informed about actions the State Consortium is taking. Reports will be

prepared for all stakeholders, members of the Consortium and the National Consortium.

Additionally, the evaluator will be charged with providing data requests from the National Consortium.

ACTION PLAN TO IMPLEMENT STRATEGY 4.5:

<u>Action</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Leadership</u>
1. Secure services of a qualified evaluator	4/03	Consortium
2. Create data collection system	9/03	Consultant

IV (a) Demonstration Projects:

Four school districts representing the demographics of Montana schools joined the State Consortium in the design phase of the grant. These four districts represent small and large school size, geographic variety, a diversity of economic wealth, and Indian reservation schools which have the highest concentration of minority (American Indian) students. These four districts will be invited to become our demonstration sites. The commitment from the demonstration sites will be to pilot or "jump start" the implementation of new policies once they are in place. These districts can then assist the State Consortium and the State of Montana in determining the benefit or burden to the district and the effectiveness of the policy to reforming school leadership and improving student learning. The rural demonstration sites will allow us to generalize our findings to other rural schools and rural states. Currently, we know that the internal governance of rural schools often follows an outmoded administrative theory and is frequently authoritarian and traditional. However, because of the small number of people, many rural school's organizational structures are more decentralized. We will be able to determine if our policy changes effect rural schools differently than urban schools and conclude which strategies are more appropriate for rural schools.

IV b: Relationship of SAELP to LEAD:

Wallace-Reader's Digest will be selecting and funding one district in Montana to implement education reform strategies. It is the expectation of the grantors that this district, known as the LEAD district, work collaborative with the SAELP Consortium and that the SAELP Consortium collaborate closely with the LEAD district.

The LEAD district superintendent will become a part of the State Consortium. At each meeting of the State Consortium, the LEAD district will inform the Consortium about LEAD plans and assist the Consortium in developing policies that support the LEAD district's initiatives. Additionally, the Consortium will call on the LEAD district to try innovative models that will help the Consortium in developing policies. For example, the LEAD district will help the Consortium understand what kind of incentives are required to cause school leaders to strive for higher levels of the career ladder certification or to participate in a leadership academy. The LEAD district will also serve as a demonstration site to jump start new policies to help the Consortium determine the benefit or burden of the policies to the district and the effectiveness of the policies in reforming education leadership and improving student learning.

V. Work Plan and Budget - Policy Making Calendar:

1st Quarter (January - March, 2002) none

2nd Quarter (April - June, 2002)

1. Amend Board of Public Education policy on certification for principals and superintendents
2. Amend Board of Public Education policy to include reciprocity for administrators who successfully pass SLLA and SSA exams
3. Call a legislative interim study committee of legislators and business leaders to study the link between student achievement and leadership

3rd Quarter (July - September, 2002)

1. Define the role of the principal and superintendent in School Improvement Planning required by Board of Public Education and influence Office of Public Instruction training
2. Conduct Board of Public Education forum and survey on the conditions of practice for school leaders
3. Update *Study of the Shortage of School Administrators* study.

4th Quarter (October - December, 2002)

5th Quarter (January - March, 2003)

1. Amend existing legislation that provides incentives for Nationally Board Certified teachers to include school leaders
2. New legislation to create a funding source for the Center for Leadership Development
3. Amend existing laws covering administrative retirement
4. Amend existing laws to redefine the duties of principal, superintendent and school district trustees

6th Quarter (April - June, 2003)

1. Redefine the traditional career path to the superintendency and principalship and change Montana School Board Association candidate searches and hiring practice training
2. Create an ongoing system of data collection through the Center for Leadership Development

7th Quarter (July - September, 2003)

1. Amend Board of Public Education policy defining standards for administrative preparation programs
2. Amend Board of Public Education policy to include mandatory professional development for school and district leaders in schools with low student achievement

8th Quarter (October - December, 2003)

1. Evaluate effectiveness of policy changes

V. Work Plan

	1st Q.	2nd Q.	3rd. Q.	4th Q.
Expert assistance on SLLA and SSA Exams for certification				
Expert technical assistance on ISLLC evaluation				
Define role of school leader in development of school improvement plans				
Amend Board of Education policy on administrative certification				
Amend Board of Education policy for administrative certification reciprocity				
Organize and train State resources to offer SLLA and SSA exams				
Convene Board of Education forum on conditions of practice				
Survey completed on conditions of practice				
Audit of School Administration preparation programs for ISLLC alignment				
Research completed on retirement options				
Stakeholder support for amendment for retirement statute revision				
Research completed to update 1999 Administrative shortage study				
Research completed on non-traditional paths to school leader positions				
Research completed on the link between student performance & leadership				
Write job descriptions for school leaders and district trustees				
Convene interim legislative study committee				
Write bills for 2003 legislative session				
Amend legislation covering administrative retirement				
Amend legislation for incentives for passing National Board Certification				
Secure legislative funding for center for Leadership Development				
Amend legislation to redefine duties of superintendents, principals, trustees				
Develop new Board of Education policy requiring professional development for school leaders in low performing schools				
Create infrastructure for Center for Leadership Development				
Develop a system for ongoing data collection on school leadership				
Expand existing and create new professional development through Center				
Amend Board of Education policy on program accreditation for adm. prep programs				
School Board Assn. adoption of ISLLC evaluation model				
School Board Assn. training of ISLLC evaluation model				

V: WORK PLAN AND BUDGET (C) Project Budget

Project Budget			
	2002	2003	Total
Personnel:			
Project Director (part time)	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$40,000
Clerical (part time)	12,000	12,000	24,000
Graduate Assistant	9,000	9,000	18,000
Benefits	<u>9,140</u>	<u>9,140</u>	<u>18,280</u>
Total Personnel:	\$50,140	\$50,140	\$100,280
Operations:			
Supplies and Materials	3,977	6,134	10,111
Research Consultants	40,000	10,000	50,000
Forums, meetings, task forces, and State Consortium travel expenses	20,000	12,000	32,000
Evaluation (10%)	12,500	12,500	25,000
Total operations	\$76,477	\$40,634	\$117,111
Direct Costs	\$126,617	\$90,774	\$217,391
Indirect Costs (15%)	<u>\$18,993</u>	<u>\$13,616</u>	<u>\$ 32,609</u>
Total Budget	\$145,610	\$104,390	\$250,000

VI. Lessons learned in Preparation of Implementation Plan

The development of a consortium committed to school improvement by focusing on leadership presented the biggest challenge. The focus for improving schools among state level policy makers tends to be on improving student achievement through improved financing of schools and by improving teacher quality. While that focus is appropriate, it has required a broadening of the attention of policy makers to include improving leadership as a critical part of improving student achievement. The challenge remains not to compete with existing school improvement efforts but to compliment and expand those efforts.

An additional lesson learned from preparing the implementation plan was our lack of attention to some key stakeholders in our design phase. The State Consortium needs to broaden its base with additional stakeholders from business, the teachers' union, parents, and rural educators. Plans are underway to either invite participation on the State Consortium from key representatives of these groups or to develop meaningful roles for these groups in the development of policy. For example, business leaders will participate with legislators in an interim study committee to examine the link between student achievement and leadership and will subsequently become important lobbyists for legislation required to improve education leadership.

The need to plan carefully for resources needed to implement our plan was a lesson that became very important in preparing the implementation plan. State agencies have limited resources and have already over-committed those resources. Resources for research needed to support policy development must be contracted with qualified researchers using the resources of the grant funds rather than become an expectation of existing staff and resources.

Perhaps the most important lesson learned in preparing the implementation grant, however, was to limit our agenda and to focus on important changes that we have confidence that can be accomplished and will have the outcome of actually improving education leadership and student learning in Montana. Earlier draft proposals were far more aggressive and it became apparent that we did not have capacity to accomplish everything that needs to be done. This realization led us to carefully prioritize the identified needs and to focus our proposal on those items that would make the most difference. This required compromise and eventual consensus among the State Consortium members, but the outcome was a plan that is attainable and one that will have the desired results.

